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translation is "he hands her back to her own Quarter." Here she remains five days, at the end of which time her father brings her back again to her husband, bringing with him a basket of yams in return for each of the pigs which made up the bride-price.

ADULTERY

A woman taken in adultery runs the risk of being killed on the spot, if her husband is so minded, and no one will blame him. Godefroy describes a former form of revenge: "A small pebble of lava would be made red-hot, and used to brand the unhappy woman's body; nine times out of ten, this would result in her death." [1]

A male adulterer is similarly liable, in principle, to be punished by death by the relatives of the outraged woman. . . . As a rule he escapes by payment of a heavy fine to the injured husband, in the form of a tusked boar.

TREATMENT OF WIVES WHO RUN AWAY

As a rule, marriages are stable, especially after the birth of children. There are, however, in the earlier years of marriage, fairly frequent cases in which the wife runs away, either on account of the husband's cruelty, or simply because she prefers someone else. When such flights from the home become more than the husband feels he can put up with, three remedies are possible:

(1) He may forcibly detain her by physical means.
(2) She may take refuge with another man.
(3) She may return to her own people, and, ultimately, a divorce may be arranged.

(1) *Forcible detention by physical means.*

Forcible detention is among the ugly features of Small Island culture, frequently alluded to among white men as a proof of the despicable nature of the natives. So far as my experience goes, such cases are rare, and could not take place if the wife's near relatives were alive and exercised effectively their right of interference.[2] One of the stock stories one hears is that of a man hamstringing his wife. Godefroy records yet another method:

"Rorin-mal is well known for his ungovernable temper; he has two wives, Le-mbe and Le-rak-rak, each of whom is jealous of the other. When Le-mbe is in the ascendant, Le-rak-rak sulks and disappears for days. Last year Rorin-mal, tired of her continued flights, resolved on a method of obtaining, with regard to her, a few months' peace. Unwinding a roll of plaited coconut sinnet, he seized her, tied her hands

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, p. 187.

[2] See p. 175.

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586 684 behind her back, and in this way suspended her from the ridge-pole of her house. Then, tying her knees together, he lit a fire under her feet. Her agonised cries brought the neighbours running to see what had happened. The husband was in no way put out by the publicity, and, just as methodically as he would roast the side of a pig, proceeded to roast her knees after he had finished with her feet. . . . Then he sat down on a stone and lit a cigarette . . . saying, 'She is always running away, and I have no other means of putting a stop to it.' . . . But he allowed her own relatives to put an end to her sufferings by tending to the sores made by the fire." [1]

Such cases, as I have said, are rare, though mild chastisement, such as beating or throwing stones, is common and is not regarded as of public concern.

586 (2) *The wife places herself under the protection of one of her husband's relatives.* An intermediate stage between successful maltreatment and straightforward divorce is illustrated by the following type of scene, which is somewhat less rare:

"Owing to some domestic quarrel, a woman has taken flight from the conjugal hearth. For several days she wanders from clan to clan; in the morning she may be seen sitting on the sea-shore, wild eyed and sullen; towards evening she may be observed standing on the reef seeking shellfish with which to satisfy her hunger at nightfall. Everyone on the island knows that she has had a disagreement with her husband and has run away. One of her husband's near relatives may decide to shelter her. In such a case he will approach her in a friendly way and say, 'Come with me; come into my enclosure.' If the woman is willing, she makes her way to her protector's house. From the moment she gets there, she starts helping the woman whose consort she will henceforward be. Everyone says, '*Meltek mo tuka*,' 'Meltek [2] has taken her, for himself.'

"For the first few months that she spends in his enclosure Meltek will not touch her; he will confine his attentions to caring for her and treating her as the friend of his legitimate wife. After a time, it becomes necessary for the situation to be cleared up. The two men meet: if they prove reasonable, matters are amicably arranged. On the one hand, Meltek, on receiving compensation for his trouble, may return the woman to her rightful owner. On the other hand, if the husband is tired of his wife's flights, or if in the end her protector is so disposed, then

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 126-7. Speiser (1, p. 70), who visited the island before Godefroy, mentions a similar case. Many such stories can be traced back to a single exceptional incident. Godefroy hastens to add: "Very different is the case of Melteronge. He also has bought two wives. Since they are both sweet-tempered and peaceful, he lives in peace with both of them and with the eight children they have presented to him."

[2] A Maki title (see p. 289) held by most adult men.